

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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R 091310Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 885

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 120

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: PROVISIONAL IRA FIRES A HEAVIER SHOT ACROSS THE BOWS

REF: (A) BELFAST 119 (B) BELFAST 111

1. PROVISIONAL IRA HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THREE BOMBS EXPLODED IN LARGE BELFAST CITY CENTER DEPARTMENT STORE BANK BUILDINGS AROUND 1715 HOURS LOCAL APRIL 8. BOMBS RECKONED EACH CONTAIN TWENTY POUNDS EXPLOSIVE AND RESULTANT FIRE CAUSED DAMAGE ESTIMATED BETWEEN ONE HALF AND ONE MILLION POUNDS STERLING. WARNING TELEPHONED OFFICE ULSTER TELEVISION APPROXIMATELY FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE FIRST BLAST AND PREMISES SUCCESSFULLY EVACUATED. REASON, OR PTETEXT, GIVEN FOR 'RETALIATORY' PROVISIONAL ACTION WAS ARMY IGNORING PROVISIONAL WARNINGS IN THAT ARMY SEARCHES IN TWO HOUSES REPUBLICAN AREAS BELFAST OVER PAST THREE DAYS HAD RESULTED IN PROPERTY DAMAGE.

2. CONDEMNATION LEVELED AT PROVISIONAL BOMBING FROM SEVERAL QUARTERS. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP) MP GERRY FITT ACCUSED PROVISIONALS OF KEEPING MILITANTS IN CITY HAPPY BY ALLOWING THEM TAKE ACTION. CANDIDATE FOR CONVENTION FROM SIX COUNTY REPUBLICAN CLUBS (OFFICIAL SINN FEIN) INQUIRED HOW UNCLASSIFIED

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BOMBING BELFAST STORE COULD BE CONSTRUED AS RETALIATION FOR

ATTACKS BY BRITISH ARMY IN MINORITY AREAS? NEW OF BOMBING COINCIDED WITH NEWS THAT TWO BELFAST REPUBLICANS SERVING LIFE SENTENCES FOR OLD BAILEY CAR BOMBINGS AND ONE LOYALIST BOMBER HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM PRISONS GREAT BRITAIN TO PRISONS NORTHERN IRELAND APRIL 8. SOME UNIONISTS PARTICULARLY ORANGE ORDER AND VANGUARD UNIONST PARTY EXPRESSING OUTRAGE AT TRANSFERS DESCRIBED AS BRITISH 'SOP TO PROVISIONAL HYPOCRITES.' QUESTION HAS ARISEN WHETHER SECSTATE REES WILL NOW PROCEED WITH PROGRAM RELEASE DETAINEES. BOTH RECENT BOMBING (REFTEL B) HAVE SHOWED CONSIDERABLE TECHNICAL SKILL AND COORDINATION. LOYALISTS HAVE LONG CHARGED ONE BASIC REASON FOR PROVISIONALS DECLARING CEASEFIRE WAS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF DETAINED PROVISIONAL LEADERS AND BOMB EXPERTS.

3. BRITISH ARMY HAS CONTINUED SEARCH OPERATIONS OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC AND PREMISES DURING CEASEFIRE PERIOD. HOWEVER HOUSE SEARCHES DURING CEASEFIRE USUALLY MADE ONLY WHEN ARMY HAS RECEIVED TIP. ONE HOUSE CITED BY PROVISIONALS AS REASON FOR BOMBING WAS UNOCCUPIED WHEN SEARCHED. IN RADIO INTERVIEW HOUSEHOLDER OF OTHER DESCRIBED LIGHT DAMAGE AND ACKNOWLEDGED ARMY HAD LEFT ITEMIZED INVENTORY OF DAMAGE FOR PURPOSES REDRESS FROM HOUSING AUTHORITY. ARMY HAS PROVIDED CONGEN WITH FOLLOWING FIGURES OF FINDS BETWEEN FEBRUARY 20 AND APRIL 4:

MACHINE GUNS - 5
RIFLES - 34
PISTOLS - 61
SHOTGUNS - 27
MORTAR BOMB - 1
AMMUNITION - 10,379 ROUNDS
EXPLOSIVES - 2404 LBS.
EXPLOSIVES FROM DEVICES - 1011 LBS
INCENDIARIES - 43
DETONATORS - 375
BLAST GRENADES - 4
RADIO SETS - 2
MAGAZINES FOR AUTOMATIC RIFLES - 46
FUSE WIRE - 2845 FEET
UNFORTUNATELY ARMY DID NOT RPT NOT HAVE INFORMATION READILY RETRIEVABLE FOR BREAKDOWN OF SOURCE OR HOLDERS OF ARMS.
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OBVIOUSLY SOME IF NOT MOST OF ABOVE FINDS MADE IN LOYALIST AREAS OR AS RESULT ARREST LOYALIST GUNMEN.
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